

Project Startup Report

Project Name: Foundation Aid System Data Portal

Agency: Department of Public Instruction

Business Unit/Program Area: Management information Systems

Project Sponsor: David Massey

Project Manager: Val Brostrom

Project Description

This project is to establish an educational portal to be accessed by DPI Foundation Aid personnel, school administrators and Special Education administrators. This portal will create a common environment to aid in reducing duplicate collections and collaborating on information dissemination. This portal will also be used for future development and growth. The focus of this project will be to improve the workflow for student contracts, automate the process for school district financial reporting, and collect the data needed for taxable valuation and Mill Levy reporting. The areas that will be addressed as part of this project are:

- Student contracts – A workflow will be implemented utilizing STARS when possible and potentially interfacing with the new IEP application when available.
- School District Financial Report – the portal will replace obsolete technology.
- Taxable valuation and Mill Levy Report – the portal will be used to collect the data, eliminating the need for manual entry.

The design of the SharePoint portal includes a Microsoft education SharePoint design session. This session will be between Microsoft experts and State personnel that are part of this project and ongoing users of the application. The outcome of this session will be a design specific to the needs of North Dakota DPI and other education stakeholders.

Business Need or Problem

The 60th Legislative Assembly passed a historic school funding package that increased money for K-12 schools by \$91 million and significantly reformed the state's school funding formula. SB 2200 is based on the work done during the interim by the North Dakota Commission on Education Improvement. It provides a framework designed to improve the adequacy and equitable distribution of funding for schools.

Implementing the Commission's changes will require a rewrite of the existing 11 year old system (last updated in 1996 created 25 years ago in the early 1980's) now residing on the mainframe. Due to the age, complexity and legacy architecture it is not cost effective or a long term solution to update the existing system.

Today, Foundation Aid calculations are created through multiple processes, many of these manual and time consuming. Creating a new payment system with the ability to provide online services such as district access to financial reports, a new entitlement calculation system capable of meeting legislative changes to funding formulas in a cost effective and timely manner, and an online financial data collection system is required to meet the Commission's recommended changes as well as provide a system needed by DPI, Legislators and Districts today. The new architecture will also allow for the addition of modules such as a Special Education and State Responsible Student Contract system that can be affordably integrated into the new Foundation Aid system.

To determine Foundation Aid payments, DPI currently compiles data from multiple sources; ORS/STARS online systems, old DOS programs, manual reports, etc. This data is extracted and combined from these sources in a laborious effort to create the data that is fed to the mainframe system to perform the calculations and payments to school districts. The existing mainframe system being replaced does not provide data collection modules and very limited data reporting features in the form of complex explanation of benefits to a school district only.

The current Foundation Aid System resides in a legacy mainframe application comprised primarily of a payment calculation module and a payment distribution module, which receives data from DPI (as described above), performs the foundation aid formulas and distributes the payments through PeopleSoft and the Bank of North Dakota.

Key Metrics

Project Start Date	Estimated Length of Project	Estimated Cost
October 27, 2007	Implementation by June 30, 2009	\$350,000

Project Startup Report

Benefits to Be Achieved	
Project Objectives	Measurement Description
Single education portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the need to access multiple applications
Create a modern environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for collaboration between educational entities with school districts and teachers
Student contracts online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current paper process takes approximately 6 months to complete. We expect this timeframe to be reduced by 50%. The collection of data currently not obtained
Online school district financial report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current paper process takes approximately 3 months to complete. The timeframe is expected to be reduced by 75%.

Cost/Benefit Analysis
<p>Benefits of doing project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology that will be supported for many years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new system will be written utilizing current systems and programming languages that will not require specialized skill sets to program and understand Flexible system capable of responding to changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By rewriting the Entitlement Calculation System in modern programming languages and keeping the infrastructure as simple as possible, the system will be capable of responding to funding formula changes in a cost effective and timely manner. The new system will be capable of adding collections in modern languages (Web applications) that do not require districts to install old software programs and send in paper reports for manual processing. <p>Implications of NOT doing project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to implement the project would be a major interruption in cash flow used to run school district operations. These risks can be mitigated by beginning the project early. Continue supporting an existing system that does not allow for the expansion needed today. Staff burden will continue to increase as foundation formulas change.

Key Constraints or Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ND State legislature has authorized spending up to \$350,000. Must be complete by June 30, 2009